

# ALASKA FARM REPORTER

Alaska Division of Agriculture  
Alaska Cooperative Extension  
Ag & Forestry Experiment Station



NATIONAL  
AGRICULTURAL  
STATISTICS SERVICE

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## POTATO STOCKS

All potatoes in storage in **ALASKA** as of April 1, 2006 totaled 80,000 cwt. This was 48 percent of the 2005 crop and compares with 93,000 cwt or 53 percent on hand during the same period last year. The 2003 level for the April 1 stocks was 52,000 cwt. The five year average stocks on hand for April 1 is 76,300 cwt.

Disappearance since January 1 was 38,000 cwt, compared to 33,000 cwt for the same period last year. The five year average disappearance between January and April is 40,500 cwt. Disappearance of potatoes from the start of the harvest to April 1 totaled 86,000 cwt; comparable disappearance for a year earlier was 84,000 cwt. The five year average disappearance is 95,300 cwt. The disappearance since October 1 reflects sales, shrinkage and waste, as well as losses caused after harvest by late blight and frost damage

The **13 MAJOR POTATO STATES** held 114 million cwt of potatoes in storage April 1, 2006, down 11 percent from last year and 9 percent below April 1, 2004, for comparable States. Ohio and Pennsylvania were dropped from the potato stocks program starting with the 2005 storage season. Potatoes in storage account for 31 percent of the 2005 fall storage States' production, down 1 percentage point from last year.

Disappearance of 259 million cwt of potatoes is down 5 percent from last year for comparable States. Shrink and loss, at 21.6 million cwt so far this season, is down 20 percent from last year for comparable States.

Processors in the 9 major States have used 133 million cwt of potatoes this season, down 2 percent from a year ago and 3 percent below 2 years ago. Dehydrating usage accounts for 27.2 million cwt of the total processing, down 9 percent from last year and 10 percent below the same date in 2004.

## MILK PRODUCTION

**ALASKA:** March milk production of 0.9 million pounds was up 0.2 million pounds from February 2006's 0.8 million pounds. Production was down 0.4 million pounds from March 2005. Milk cows, at 800 head, were down 400 head from a year ago. Production per cow at 1,090 pounds was up 170 pounds from February and up 40 pounds from March 2005.

Total milk production for January through March was 2.4 million pounds compared with 3.6 million pounds for the same period in 2005.

Milk production in the **23 MAJOR STATES** during March totaled 14.6 billion pounds, up 5.5 percent from March 2005. February revised production, at 13.0 billion pounds, was up 5.9 percent from February 2005. The February revision represented a decrease of 7 million pounds from last month's preliminary production estimate.

**Production per cow** in the 23 major States averaged 1,773 pounds for March, 66 pounds above March 2005.

**The number of milk cows** on farms in the 23 major States was 8.22 million head, 124,000 head more than March 2005, and 17,000 head more than February 2006.

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## PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS

**Oats:** Acres seeded and to be seeded for the 2006 crop year are expected to total 4.32 million acres, up 2 percent from last year's planted area. Area planted to oats is expected to increase or remain unchanged in 18 States, including most States across the central Corn Belt and Great Plains. North Dakota, the leading State in terms of oat area planted, is expecting 560,000 acres of oats to be planted in 2006, up 70,000 acres from 2005. Large increases are also expected in South Dakota and Texas, with both States expecting increases of 30,000 acres from last year. Compared with 2005, the largest declines in planted acreage are expected in California and Minnesota, both down 20,000 acres from last year.

**Barley:** Growers intend to plant 3.67 million acres for 2006, down 5 percent from last year. If realized, this will be the lowest barley planted acreage on record. In North Dakota, expected area planted was 1.20 million acres, unchanged from 2005's record low area. Meanwhile, Montana's expected area decreased 11 percent to 800,000 acres, and Idaho's and Washington's prospective plantings were both down 5 percent from last year, to 600,000 and 205,000 acres, respectively. If realized, Idaho's expected acreage will be the lowest since 1968, while Montana and Washington growers will plant

the smallest area since 1953. Growers in California, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, and Michigan expected to plant more acres than in 2005. While market hogs were estimated at 1,300 head. Last year there were 300 head of breeding hogs and 1,400 head of market hogs.

**Hay:** Producers expect to harvest 61.5 million acres of all hay in 2006, down fractionally from 2005. With the exception of Oklahoma, harvested acres are expected to decline or remain unchanged from last year throughout the Great Plains and adjacent areas of the Corn Belt. The State with the largest expected increase is Oklahoma, up 180,000 acres from last year. Wildfires and drought conditions during last fall and winter in Oklahoma combined to limit available pasture and increase supplemental feeding. With hay supplies low, farmers in Oklahoma are expecting to harvest more hay acres this year. The States with the largest decrease in harvested area are North Dakota and Texas, with expected declines of 430,000 and 350,000 acres, respectively, from 2005. Drought conditions have been so severe in Texas that farmers have low expectations about the amount of hay ground they will be able to harvest this year, despite the current low hay supplies in the State.